

## Memories and Friends

Written by

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I first met George Kanin when I was 16, thirty-three years ago in Severn Falls, Ontario and it was through him that I met Jim. George became a surrogate brother to me when I first moved to Toronto two years later and even though he has lived out west for the past 30 odd years, we have remained good friends. When Jim and I first met Joan, I think she was a little overwhelmed by George's "crazy" friends but we bonded quickly. Even though we didn't see them often, we always felt comfortable together and our friendship is proof that neither time nor distance can interfere with the bond we have. Jim's death may have knocked the wind out of many sails, but his life put a lot of wind in them in the first place. George had met Rick once when he came out to visit Jim and I at Grandview so when I married Rick, he wasn't a stranger to him. When Rick and I visited George and Joan two years ago, we were instantly made to feel welcome. That's the wonderful thing about good friends, there is no judgement ever, only acceptance. Over the past couple of days, we have all done a lot of reminiscing about Jim and it is so comforting to all be able to contribute something without anyone feeling left out. Everyone of us has a bond with Jim and through him, with each other and though he is no longer here on earth, is still very much a part of our lives. We didn't spend time crying about this person we loved, but we sure did a lot of laughing about the things he did.

Helen watched George and Jim grow up from children to young men to fathers, each of three children. She and George Sr. remembered some challenges that parents of adolescents, then teenagers go through. George Jr. and I remembered some of the crazy antics that we went through in our late teens and early 20's. Joan and Rick each shared their first and then later impressions of Jim and we all shared how he impacted our lives. I felt his presence there and I know he laughed when we did. I'm sure there were a few stories he wished we hadn't shared with his Mom, but I know he approved of this reunion. We shared memories and made some more. It was a wonderful visit!